

The Port Trust and the Legislative Council

The Board of Trustees who manage the Port are nominated by the Governor and they represent financial, shipping, oiling and trading interests in the Colony and the prosperity of their own interests depends on the continued prosperity of the Port, just as the prosperity of the Colony depends on that of the Port. Government is represented on the Board by the Financial Secretary, the Royal Navy by the Resident Naval Officer, and the Air Officer Commanding has his own representative, so that the Chairman has a body of able men personally interested in the well-being of the port who have among their number experts in finance, business, shipping and naval and military affairs. Trading and shipping interests may on occasion clash, so normally their representatives are approximately equal in numbers and no particular interest is allowed to predominate. The system works very well, and I see no reason why it should not continue to do so, but some people may consider that the time has nearly come when the practice for all the Trustees to be the Governor's nominees should be modified. This is a matter of opinion, and there are certainly some people who would like to see the Chamber of Commerce and the Aden Shipping Federation directly represented. Labour, as such, is not represented on the Board and until their leaders have more experience and are more mature it would be unwise to experiment in this direction.

The Trustees meet at least once a fortnight, and are required to do so by the Act which gives them authority, and to encourage them not to neglect this duty they receive a fee for each attendance. The Act also lays down that the fee is payable only to such of the Trustees as are present from the beginning to the end of the meeting. It is not often that such common-sense is met with in official Acts.

In my time the Trustees always forgathered before the meeting on the verandah of the Port Trust building, summer and winter alike. They refused to have anything to do with waiting in the comfortable and reasonably cool Board Room. They did not say anything; they just remained outside on the verandah and a few minutes before the time for the meeting it was customary for the Chairman to join them there.

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Aden

000 I appear to have been discretion itself between 1948 and 1951; most extraordinary.

There is one other subject which, although it only indirectly concerned the Legislative Council at first, became later very much an affair of the Legislative Council, about which I shall record my own somewhat short-sighted conduct.

631 In 1945 the Government had raided the Municipal larder and

632 taken over the profit-making Electricity Department and the

• [655] equally financially satisfactory Water Department, and at the

[365] same time they abolished the old Settlement Authority and created a Township Authority, which was, in fact, much the

same thing as a municipality but with much reduced powers.

This latter was a retrograde step with which I personally was

never in accord and which was generally resented, and it was

not surprising that early in 1948 the newspapers began to

clamour for increased powers for the Township Authority or

its conversion into a fully fledged municipality. At the same

time there began a demand for the election of the Members

and one particular section of the Press was loud in pressing for

municipal reforms of the most far-reaching character.

641 Now, I was not in favour of elections, believing that the time

was not ripe for such a very big step forward and in consequence

I found myself at variance with most of the other

Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council, who favoured

elections in the municipal field of politics, but not necessarily

000 in the legislative field. However, I was not altogether alone

in my opposition because Mackawwi felt much the same as I

did and one morning he came into the Port Trust Office,

shook hands rather limply, sat down and folded one of his long

thin legs over the other and said nothing. He looked rather

tired and I asked how he was feeling.

"I am not well, I have not been well since I retired from

business and gave up my work; that was a very foolish thing

to do," he said.

"Have you seen a doctor?" I asked.

"I have seen all the doctors in Aden and most of those in

Bombay," was his answer.

"Have you followed their advice?" I inquired.

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- 232 *Equine Contagious Disease.*—In February, sudden deaths amongst the hackney carriage horses occurred, and, as a result of post-mortems, African horse sickness was suspected. By taking prompt precautionary measures, the disease was confined to Crater. Nine deaths were recorded.

Three segregation camps for cattle are being constructed, two at Sheikh Othman and one at Maala.

Fisheries

- 226 Fishing is, generally speaking, good, but the quantity of fish caught is greatly influenced by the movements of the different species of sardinella on which the large species feed. Shark, barracuda, horse-mackerel, sea-perch, dolphins, the smaller members of the tunny family, rock cod soles, and mullet are the principal edible fish. Sword or sail fish make their appearance at certain seasons of the year, but are not easily saleable for human consumption. Crabs and crawfish are to be had at all seasons, and oysters are available in the winter months. The fishermen are a very industrious people and employ various kinds of nets as well as hand-lines in their work. The nets used are of the stationary, circular throwing, and drag varieties, the latter being used from the shore. In addition a special net is operated from boats working in pairs during the monsoon period. Throwing nets for mullet, mackerel and a form of whitebait are also in use. The catch is at times greater than the requirements for local consumption, and the surplus is salted for export. Shark is almost invariably treated in this manner, and during some seasons large quantities are dried. Whitebait is exported.

The fishermen are subject to certain rules which forbid trawls and limit the size of nets, and in addition they defer to the judgment of their elected Akils in matters of fishing custom.

- 228 Licences to dive for pearls both in the harbour and in the waters of Perim are obligatory, but no licences are required to fish.

Salt

- 258 A salt work was first constructed by the Italian firm of Messrs. Gaustalla and Company (now styled The Aden Salt Works) in the year 1885, and it carries on a profitable business in salt production at Sheikh Othman. This was followed by the salt work constructed in 1909 by the Bombay firm of Messrs. Abdullabhoj and Joomabhoj Lalljee and Company. Two more salt works have since been constructed by Messrs. Hajeebhoj Lalljee and Company and the Little Aden Salt Industrial Company in May, 1923, and October, 1927, respectively, and they continue to work successfully. The total quantity of salt exported to India and other places during the last year was 230,379 tons. The monopoly of salt for local consumption is in the hands of Government, who have licensed certain pits to Arabs at Sheikh Othman.

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five and three steamers respectively which run between Aden⁵⁰⁵ and Mukalla, Shehr, Berbera, Zeila, Perim, Djibouti, Mocha, Kamaran, Hodeidah, Gizan, Medi and Port Sudan. Very frequent services of dhows also trade to and from these ports and in addition to many other little ports on both sides of southern Red Sea, Gulf of Aden up to Persian Gulf and also to Socotra.

Many other shipping lines make occasional calls at Aden in connection with cargo, and other lines call at Aden for bunkers only.

The only ports for which there is a poor direct service are the Levant Spanish and Portuguese ports. Cargo is sent with transhipment at Port Said.

Roads.

There are no railways in the Colony and all transport is by⁴⁹⁶ road or by sea. The sea transport is not great and consists of⁴³⁸ the carriage of salt and building materials from Little Aden to Tawahi and Maala.

It is difficult to give an accurate estimate of the road mileage⁴⁹¹ as the side roads in the town which are used principally by pedestrians and camels do not require to be kept up, and the Royal Air Force maintain certain of the roads which lie in the Military Area. The Aden Settlement maintain 13 miles of bituminous macadam road and 19 miles of water-bound macadam road.

Motor Transport.

On the 31st December, 1937, there were 198 licensed public⁴³⁴ cars and 53 licensed omnibuses. The number of private cars was 367 and there were 66 licensed lorries and trucks.

The following statement shows the countries of origin of the⁴³⁹ above motor vehicles:—⁴³⁴

					No. of vehicles.
1.	British Empire	...	...	...	234
2.	United States of America...	...	...	...	391
3.	French	...	...	...	9
4.	Italian	...	...	...	36
5.	German	...	...	...	14
Total					684

Trade with the interior is conducted mainly by camel caravans, but as roads and routes in the Aden Protectorate are being developed more and more cars and lorries are being brought into use.

Post Office.

The Postmaster at Steamer Point is responsible for the postal⁶⁵⁵ services under the general control of the Finance Officer. The²⁰⁵ offices in the Colony are situated at Steamer Point, Camp and

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205 Khormaksar. In addition there is a sub-office on Kamaran Island in the Red Sea and one at Mukalla in the Eastern Aden Protectorate. The Eastern Aden Protectorate has also a number of postal agencies.

Prior to the 1st April, 1937, Aden was included in the Indian Postal System and Indian postage stamps were used. As from the date mentioned, Aden became a separate Postal Administration with its own issue of stamps.

The stamp design includes a vignette of an Arab dhow, a type of craft which has been associated with Aden from time immemorial. The denominations of stamps are: annas $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, 1, 2, $2\frac{1}{2}$, 3, $3\frac{1}{2}$, and 8; and rupees 1, 2, 5, and 10.

Aden, being on the main shipping route between Europe and the Far East, is an important office of exchange. Mails from Europe and India arrive weekly on the P. and O. mail steamer. Bags for British Somaliland are transhipped to a local steamer sailing for Berbera. Mails for East Africa are unloaded and warehoused in the Steamer Point Post Office until a suitable opportunity occurs to forward them to Mombasa, Tanga, Zanzibar or Dar es Salaam as the case may be. Mails are despatched to India and Europe weekly by the P. and O. mail steamers.

Mails between Aden and the local Red Sea and Aden Gulf ports are carried by the local steamers of Messrs. Cowasjee Dinshaw and Brothers and the Halal Shipping Company. Use is also made of the Royal Air Force planes and a local air service to the Hadhramaut and Djibouti.

Aden is off the main trunk air routes from Europe to India and Africa. Air mail letters for transmission to places served by Imperial Airways are sent to Egypt by steamer in the first instance.

The principal letter rates are:—

Inland and India—			
Not exceeding one tola	...	...	1 anna.
Each additional tola	...	...	$\frac{1}{2}$ "
United Kingdom and British Possessions—			
Not exceeding one oz.	...	...	$2\frac{1}{2}$ annas.
Each additional oz.	...	...	2 "
Foreign Countries—			
Not exceeding one oz.	...	...	$3\frac{1}{2}$ annas.
Each additional oz.	...	...	2 "
Registration Fee	...	...	3 "

Parcels are accepted for transmission directly or indirectly with nearly every country in the world, and a cash-on-delivery service operates with Great Britain and with India. Letters and parcels may be insured up to a value of Rs.3,000.

Direct money-order services exist between Aden and Great Britain, India, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda, Tanganyika,

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Zanzibar and the Italian East African colonies. Indirectly, 655 money-orders may be sent to nearly every country in the 205 world. By far the greatest volume of traffic is between Aden and India. On an average about 6 lakhs are remitted to India by money-order annually.

British postal-orders are on sale and are cashed at all sub-offices.

There is a Post Office Savings Bank. The amount standing to the credit of depositors in 1937 was about 6 lakhs. Interest is paid at the rate of 2 per cent. per annum. 454

There is no internal telegraph system. The telephone system 206 is described in the following paragraph. External telegraphic communication (both by cable and wireless) is maintained by the Eastern Telegraph Company.

Telegraphs.

External telegraphic communication with Aden is maintained by the Eastern Telegraph Company. This company was formed in 1872 to take over, and operate as a whole, cables between England and India, which had already been laid and were being worked under the control of several independent companies.

The formation of the Eastern Telegraph Company was followed by a steady development of the cable system, and Aden immediately became an important junction station, inasmuch as the Red Sea cables branch out from Aden to Bombay, Colombo, Seychelles and Zanzibar, and telegrams from England and the West generally, destined for India, Ceylon and the Far East, Mauritius and Madagascar, and East and South Africa were retransmitted from Aden into the corresponding cable eastwards.

Although, with modern improvements and inventions, retransmission by intermediate stations along a chain of cables is now done by automatic relays, Aden has always remained an important cable centre, and is in touch with all parts of the world through the communications system of Cable and Wireless Limited with which the Eastern Telegraph Company is now associated.

The Eastern Telegraph Company also operates a wireless station, maintaining point-to-point services between Aden and Berbera, Djibouti, Kamaran, Perim, Mukalla, Assab, Alula and Bahrain.

Direct communication with the Yemen is provided by means of a cable from Aden, which is landed at Sheikh Said on the Yemen coast opposite Perim.

The main cable office at Ras Boradli is always open for the reception and despatch of telegrams. There are branch offices at Steamer Point and Aden Camp, which serve the shipping and business centre.

Telephones.

206 The Government Telephone Exchange is worked on the central battery system and has a capacity of 200 exchange lines.

655 Early telephone developments in Aden were associated with the defence of the fortress. The first system (a magneto one) was installed and operated by the military authorities and later, when the Air Ministry became responsible for defence, the control of the telephones naturally passed to that Ministry.

From 1927 onwards endeavours were made to get the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department to accept responsibility for the system, but it was not till 1932 that the Indian Authorities took it over. By that time the magneto exchange and the overhead lines had reached the end of their useful life. The old system was therefore discontinued and a new central battery system constructed at a cost (including buildings) of about Rupees 1,50,000.

The present rates for direct connections are:—

	Rs.
Within a radius of 3 miles of the exchange ...	300 per annum.
For each additional half mile or fraction thereof ...	40 ..
An extension in the same building costs Rs. 120/- per annum.	

XII.—PUBLIC WORKS.

653 The public works in Aden are managed by the Aden Port Trust who maintain a separate staff for this department. For this service the Port Trust are paid the actual expenditure of this department plus $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for office accommodation and other incidental expenses.

A general programme of minor works was carried out. Provision was also made for the construction of quarters for the Chief Justice, the Legal Adviser and the Education Officer, but these houses were only partially complete at the end of the year.

Two of the Political Officers' bungalows, started in December, 1936, were completed and occupied and the bungalow for the third Political Officer was started.

Works in connection with roads, the development of the water supply and the electricity supply were undertaken by the Aden Settlement.

The harbour and wharves are under the control of the Aden Port Trust. General works of improvement were carried out during the year.

XIII.—JUSTICE, POLICE AND PRISONS.**Justice and Crime.**

692 The Colony has a Supreme Court with unlimited civil and criminal jurisdiction. An appeal lies from the Supreme Court to the High Court of Judicature at Bombay—

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Mechanical Workshop

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A vehicle workshop is maintained where all Government motor vehicles are serviced and repaired. Animal drawn vehicles such as refuse carts, night soil carts, etc., are also made and repaired.

Furniture

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The Government instituted a scheme to manufacture and repair furniture on hire to officials residing in Government houses. Two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds was spent during 1949 and 1950 on new furniture made in the workshop and obtained from contractors.

Building Plans

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Building plans submitted by the general public for approval are checked and then forwarded to the Township Authority for sanction. All buildings in course of erection are inspected at regular intervals to ensure that they comply with regulations. Two hundred and seventy-six permanent building permits were issued during the two years.

Crown Lands

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The Director of Public Works, who is also Commissioner and Registrar of Lands, scrutinises various titles submitted to him for transfers of immoveable property. All transfers are registered. One hundred and forty-five plots of land were leased to the public for the erection of residential, commercial and industrial buildings in the period under review.

Stores

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As many new works and all maintenance works are carried out by direct labour, large stocks of building and other stores have to be kept. Stocks valued at £91,200 in 1949 and £78,000 in 1950 were issued from the Central Stores Depot.

Labour

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Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining skilled artisans but plenty of labourers were available. The standard of tradesmen is not high, but it is hoped that the new Technical College will go a long way to raise the standard.

Chapter 11: Communications

ROADS

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There are no railways in the Colony and the communication between the townships is by road.

The main roads are constructed in bituminous macadam, and the carriage-ways vary in width from 20 feet to about 40 feet. Some secondary roads are similarly constructed. There are about eight miles of streets in the bazaar areas which have not yet been made up.

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sion was made in the Fortress Township for the election of three members, who must be of Aden or British birth; the franchise was limited to males born or resident for a stipulated period in Aden, and with a property qualification which was reduced by half (giving an electorate of about 5,000) after the 1949 election had resulted in the return of an Arab merchant, a Pakistani advocate, and a Parsee merchant. 632

The climate of Aden Colony and of the southern coast is generally pleasant between November and March. The summer heat, though great, is less intense than that of the interior of Arabia or of Iraq, but this is more than offset by the oppressive humidity between April and October. Rainfall is trifling, but heavy thunderstorms occur irregularly. The town relies for its water-supply on bore-holes at Shaikh Othman, supplemented by supplies in the famous Tanks, which date from pre-Islamic times and were restored for use in 1856. They have a storage capacity of 8 million gallons. Aden is a free port and there are no customs dues except on liquor, drugs, tobacco, motor spirit, and salt. Salt is a government monopoly, and is produced locally in large quantities for export by evaporation from sea-water. The only other local industries are dhow-building, soap manufacture, dyeing, cigarette-making, and fishing. 132
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The present prosperity of the Colony depends on its importance as a bunkering port for coal and oil, for which purposes it handles a tonnage of shipping comparable with that of Liverpool. This balance will be altered when the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's new 5-million-tons-a-year refinery, begun in November 1952, comes on stream in 1954.¹ Apart from the export of salt (which supplied in 1950 75 per cent of India's imports of that commodity), the bulk of Aden's other trade consists of entrepôt and transshipment between neighbouring countries. The number of vessels, exclusive of country craft (sailing dhows, etc.) which entered the port during 1951 was 4,338 with an aggregate tonnage of 18,715,839, more than double the figure for 1938; the number of country craft was 1,643 with a tonnage of 128,201, a decrease of 17 per cent compared with the previous year. Recent estimates of imports and exports were: 504
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	Imports	Exports
	(£ million)	
1948	2.29	1.88
1949	2.73	2.19
1950	3.49	3.23
1951	4.19	3.70
1952	4.71	3.80

(SOURCE: *Digest of Colonial Statistics*, no. 10, September-October 1953).

¹ *Petroleum Press Service*, December 1952.